

A Song for Christmas

HANT me a rhyme of
Christmas—
Sing me a jovial song—
And though it is filled with
laughter,
Let it be pure and strong

Sing of the hearts brimmed over
With the story of the day—
Of the echo of childish voices
That will not die away—

Of the blare of the tasseled bugle,
And the timeless clatter and beat
Of the drum that throbs to muster
Squadrons of scampering feet.

But, O, let your voice fall fainter,
Till, blent with a minor tone,
You temper your song with the beauty
Of the pity Christ hath shown,

And sing one verse for the voiceless;
And yet, ere the song be done,
A verse for the ears that hear not,
And a verse for the sightless one.

For though it be time for singing
A merry Christmas glee,
Let a low, sweet voice of pathos
Run through the melody.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



"For he's a jolly good fellow
Which nobody can deny."

The Onlooker WILBUR D. NESBIT MODERN WAR



The leading financiers of Europe have instructed Turkey and Italy that hostilities must be confined to a restricted territory.—Cable Dispatch.

The troops were on parade and the drums and bugles played. While the bayonets were glinting in the sun. The skirmish lines leaped out and the soldiers crept about. Until the enemy was on the run. The bullets hissed and whined for marks that they might find. A cheer of victory came from each throat. When up there stepped a clerk who stopped the bloody work. By saying he would now collect that note.

The ships were in the bay with their guns in grim array. They opened fire against the forts on shore. The batteries cut loose and they raised the very deuce. The earth was shaking with the awful roar. The hundred-pounders howled and the spitting maxims growled. But in an instant all the fight was through. For through the smoke and flame a wireless message came. "Call off the men; your note is overdue."

The siege saved up the town; the walls were battered down. The sentinels were watching day and night. With sortie and attack and charging forth and back. The soldiers had put up a sturdy fight. Up ran a flag of truce—it wasn't any use. For half an hour before there was a groan. The general, you see, had met an A. D. T. Who handed him: "The banks call in the loan."

O, Alex called the Great! O, Caesar, thank your fate. You died before we battled in the banks. O, doughty Bonaparte, battlemaster of war's art. Be glad you do not now command the ranks. And Lion-Hearted Dick, who loved a battle thick. And Hannibal, who o'er the Alps could dash— Call up the serried hosts of all your soldiers' ghosts. And tell them that today we fight with cash.

Undeceiving Him.

"I think," said the tradesman to the gentleman who put in his time disputing any and all questions, "I think you ought to pay that little bill." "You think I ought to pay that little bill, do you?" mimicked the debtor. "I certainly think so." "Well, you just keep on trying that Christian science treatment on me. I'll have you know, sir, that the mental theory of—"

Reformed Him.

"What did you do with that drunken passenger who rode two stations beyond his destination?" asks the motor-man of the conductor. "You mean that fellow who went to sleep and wanted to fight me, saying I had carried him by his corner intentionally?" "I guess that was the man. He was pretty full." "It must have been the fellow. Awful drunk, wasn't he?" "Yes. What did you do to him?" "Swore him off."

Can't Please Them.

"May I ask," inquired the magnate who was defendant in proceedings in which he was sued for merging a lot of corporations, "may I ask what brings you to court?" "Yes, sir," answered the man sitting next him. "I'm defendant in bankruptcy proceedings." "Huh," commented the magnate. "It's a funny world. Here they are suing you because you didn't make money and suing me because I did."

The Overdone Part.

"Not bad for a beginner," says the chief architect to his apprentice, looking over the plans drawn by the latter. "But don't you think you have overdone it?" "Overdone it? How?" "You have allowed for a complete roof on each story."

Wilbur D. Nesbit.

Children and Christmas in Many Lands

THE little folks of all the world do not keep Christmas as the children of this country do. In fact each land has its own peculiar ways, and our people, being drawn originally from almost every clime, have introduced into our celebration of the day a bit of the Christmas features brought from mother countries. We have the Dutch Santa Claus, the German Christmas tree, the English plum pudding and carols and our own peculiarly lavish gift making.

The boys and girls of far distant countries are spending the day in such different ways that it may prove of interest to young and old to hear something of the distinctive Christmas customs.

CHRISTMAS in Holland is the gala day of the year for the children. They have a pretty custom of ushering it in. Just at midnight on Christmas eve, the men and boys dressed in fancy costume, march through the streets in long procession, holding aloft a brilliantly lighted star, as they chant the "Gloria in Excelsis." The little girls clad in white stand at the windows and bow to the star as it passes.

THE children of Belgium on Christmas Eve are dressed in gay colors and form a procession, led by an orchestra and singing carols. Each child holds aloft either a Christchild in a manger or a crucifix.

a blazing tree hung with cakes, colored candles and gifts. It is a pretty sight to see the children march in to see their tree, singing as they go, "O, Tannen Baum" (O, Fir Tree), to the air of "Maryland, My Maryland."

In many German towns just as the bells ring to usher in Christmas, every window in every house is quickly lighted. Then the children are up bright and early, even the tiny babies, to go to six o'clock church. Often each child bears a candle to illuminate the church.

The German Kriss Kingle has one horrid habit that our jolly old St. Nick would scorn. He generally leaves in the stockings a bunch of switches in case they should be needed before his next call.

THE English Christmas is not unlike ours, save that we do not have their pretty custom of "bringing in the yule." In almost every family in England the boys and girls gather about the burning log on Christmas eve to sing carols and tell Christmas legends. Often the children who live in the country assist at the dragging in of the huge log.

An English child would not feel it was Christmas if there was not a bit of mistletoe hanging in the hall, under which the unwary are kissed soundly. Little and big eat the rich and blazing plum pudding, and all join in the singing of Christmas carols and church-going.

THE Serbian children have a strange custom. On Christmas Eve the father of the family goes to the wood and cuts a straight young oak, which he drags into the room where the family awaits him, saying as he does so: "Good evening and a merry Christmas!"

Then the children shout back: "May God grant both to thee and mayst thou have riches and honor."

With this they shower their father with corn and the tree is thrown on the fire to burn until Christmas morning, when it is greeted with pistol shots.

THE French children rarely have a tree. Sometimes they hang up slippers to be filled, instead of stockings, and there is great chanting of "Noel, Noel," the Christmas song.

Like the Scandinavian children, little French boys and girls never forget the birds, but instead of placing sheaves of grain on long poles, they are hung along the eaves of the houses.

AMERICAN mothers find one day of Christmas merrymaking distracting enough for their children, how would they like to live in Russia, where work is often suspended for a fortnight, while all the people keep holiday.

Even the poorest peasant has a tree and it is harvest time for beggars, for no one will refuse him anything.

In some of the country districts the boys dress as animals, and led by other boys as keepers, march through the streets headed by a band of boys making loud music with brass sounding instruments. These processions go from door to door, pound until they are admitted, and all given food and drink, and two small pieces of money.

All over Scandinavia a week is given to merrymaking. Every one goes to six o'clock church on the dark Christmas morning, and in the evening every home in the land is illuminated. They have wonderful trees, around which grown people and children dance and sing. The Scandinavian child is very good to the poor on Christmas and takes gifts and food to poor families.

It was Christmas morning, and Brownson was taking the air, when a seedy-looking man strode up the garden path.

"Merry Christmas, guv'nor," he said, insinuatingly. "I've called for my Christmas box."

"Christmas box?" said Brownson. "Why, I don't know you. Are you the village dustman?"

"No, sir. I'm the chap who played the cornet outside here last year, and you told me to take my 'ook."

"Oh you are?" said our hero, feeling his biceps in a menacing manner. "And why, pray, should I give you a Christmas box?"

"Well, guv'nor," explained the supplicant, "I haven't been playing this year."

And perceiving that he had been spared some agony, Brownson parted with a Christmas sixpence.

Bulgarian "Koleda." In Bulgaria "Koleda," as Christians is called, is marked with many quaint ceremonies. One is called "Koledars," the name given to a band of boys, mostly, who go about proclaiming that the season of fasting is over, and heralding a reign of feasting and merriment. Each Koleda party numbers seven—the Old Man, the Old Woman, the Crumb Picker (who collects the presents and money, while the Old Man and Old Woman play the fool) and Four Singers, who carol out the Christmas songs. The attire of the Koledars is most grotesque, and their procession is joined by a huge crowd of townspeople, who take a great deal of light in the antics of the jesters.

Christmas Wine and Walnuts

Wonderful Man.

Decem—Ginks had the most wonderful control of his features of any man I ever knew.

Burr—I understand he was a marvel.

Decem—He was. Why, I've even seen that man look pleased when he saw what his wife had bought him for Christmas.

In Advance.

Mrs. Skinfint—Oh, John! Mary, the parlor maid, has just swallowed a quarter! What ever shall we do?

Old Skinfint—Do? Well, I suppose we'd better let her keep it. She'd have expected a Christmas present, anyhow!

Once Enough.

"Christmas comes but once a year," said the cheery citizen.

"No use in its coming twice a year," said the morose person. "Must give a man a chance to save a little money before he can spend it!"

Too Late.

Highwayman—Halt! Your money or your life!

Victim—It's no go, stranger. My wife's in the same line of business always at Christmas time, and she's just finished with me.

A MYSTERY.

Dudley Nobs—Why does Santa always leave valuable presents to rich folks and cheap ones to poor people? Why don't he even things up?

A Clean Sweep.

Caroline—I've been in the stores all day.

Pauline—So soon after Christmas, and still shopping?

Caroline—Shopping! I guess not. I'm exchanging all my presents.

Dudley Nobs—Pa, there's one thing about Santa Claus I never could understand.

Mr. Nobs—What is that, my son?

At the Dinner.

Last Christmas a certain man was invited to a big dinner at the house of one of the leading town. At the dinner he placed opposite a goose.

The lady of the house, on the minister's left, goose he remarked:

"Shall I sit so close to it?" Finding his words a bit he turned round to the lady in a most inoffensive tone.

"Excuse me, my lady; roast one."

OPPORTUNE.



George—Ah, Lily, dear, this will be the jolliest Christmas I've ever spent. Now that we're engaged I think only of the future.

Lily—Do you? Well, at this time of the year I think only of the present.

Christmas Thanks.

When turkey's on the table laid, And good things I may scan, I'm thankful that I wasn't made A vegetarian.

Trouble and a Turkey.

Brown was boasting of the fine turkey he had bought for Christmas. "Biggest bird I ever saw; cost me seven-fifty."

"That's nothing to the turkey I had last Christmas," said his friend Jones. "It cost me \$150."

"One hundred and fifty dollars!" positively shrieked Brown, in his incredulity.

"Yes," said Jones, bitterly.

"Turkeys," said Brown, looking him straight in the eye, "are generally to be bought for a quarter a pound. Say yours was a quarter, then it must have weighed about 630 pounds!"

"It only weighed twenty pounds," said Jones, sadly; "but I bought it alive and tried to kill it myself. It flew all over the house first and did \$150 worth of damage."

Two Kinds.

There are friends and Christmas tree friends. The latter take all the presents they can get and present you with beautiful bouquets.

REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS

Primarily a Religious Anniversary, and Only Secondarily a Festival of Good Cheer.

Christmas day draws near the lion arise how far the opportunity the others happy has been utilized. To whom has the essential message of this season been carried, the message of good will?

This is not a question of what has been given in form of physical tokens. The Christmas spirit is not confined to the exchanging of gifts. A word, a letter, a handclasp may suffice. The exchange of greetings should never be perfunctory at such a time. Wishing another "Merry Christmas" should express the hope that his day may be in truth a happy one, happy in all its significance and possibilities, and that it may be a token of brighter, more joyous times to come.

A certain veneer of custom has enshrouded this most significant of all festive days. There is danger that the real meaning of it may be lost in the somewhat commercial spirit that has developed of late years. In the churches hymns of praise are sung and sermons are preached to bring back the thoughts of men to the real nature of the day, but each individual may make it a true Christmas by applying the principles of him whose birth is about to be celebrated. Let it not be forgotten that after all Christmas is primarily the anniversary of the event which forms the foundation of the Christian religion, and only secondarily a festival of good cheer and personal jubilation.

THE FIRST PRESENTS.

The giving of Christmas presents was first introduced by the early Romans. They exchanged gifts freely, but in compliance with a sumptuary law they were never allowed to give anything very elaborate. The receiver of a present which was judged too expensive had to offer it up for auction, when it was knocked down to the highest bidder, and the money appropriated by the national treasurer of the period. Consequently, although the Romans continued to distribute their presents in great numbers, they had to confine their offerings to such trifles as jars of olives, napkins, jeweled fishes, boxes of toothpicks, candies, cloaks and sweetmeats.

Ancestral Christmas Punch.

"Yes," said the fair young thing; "that Christmas punch you have just tasted is made from a recipe that has been treasured in the family for centuries. The earliest authentic record we have of it was in the lifetime of my great-great-uncle's great-grandfather, whose suit of armor stands in the hall."

"If he drank much of that punch," observed the young man, who had had two glasses of it, "he must have wished he was wearing that armor on his inside instead of his outside."